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Identifiers-Thirteen Professors Project

An attempt to provide college professors more contact with the classroom situations that their students will face as teachers is reported in this edited account of the experiences of 13 professors in a pilot study which was aimed at teaching the disadvantaged (reluctant learners). Included in the first sections are brief descriptions of the organization of the study (each professor was paired with a teacher in his specialty in a nearby public school and taught a one-semester course), the variety of students involved in the classes, and relevant course objectives devised by the professors. The middle sections, describing the professors' perceptions of their pupils and, at greater length, episodes in teaching and learning, include insights by professors about their pupils in positive terms, and about the need to activate the student through the use of spontaneous, flexible teaching and pertinent subject matter. The final sections are composed of implications for teacher education derived by the professors from their experiences, including the need for education about language usage and structure within the entire teaching profession, for practicum experience, for a thorough knowledge of the subject matter, and for closer contact between professors and teachers in public schools. A recapitulatory section emphasizes the problem of loss of status with peers by participating professors as a result of their involvement with the schools. (SM)

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PROJECT REPORT/FIVE
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THIRTEEN PROFESSORS PROJECT:

EPISODES IN POSITIVE TEACHING

May, 1967

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for

New England School Development Council
New England Board of Higher Education
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in Teaching Disadvantaged Youth

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INTRODUCTION

In the spring term of 1967, the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) and the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) with the support and stimulation of the NDEA National Institute for Advanced Study in Teaching Disadvantaged Youth, invited various colleges (mostly private liberal arts institutions) to participate in a pedagogic attempt to communicate certain subject matter to elementary or high school students attending classes in deprived neighborhoods. There was no difficulty in recruiting high status college professors to meet the challenge. The professors, some of whom had already ventured into the public school classrooms, were paired with a teacher of their specialty in a nearby public school system. All the professors found this to be a difficult but exhilarating experience and were willing to go back for another turn. However, many of them complained that they lost status and prestige with their colleagues by moving in high school and elementary school circles. This is a summary of the experience of the thirteen academics as they reported them both in an oral debriefing session and in writing.

The assignment roster of colleges, schools, teachers, professors, and principals is appended to this publication. Richard H. Goodman, Executive Secretary, NESDEC, served as project coordinator; William C. Kvaraceus and Helen J. Kenney served as NDEA National Institute liaison-consultants to the project.

I

A realistic appraisal of the present state of teacher training must recognize the fact that few institutions are equipped to provide relevant preparation for the prospective teacher of disadvantaged youth. Although the well-publicized failure of schools in the urban ghettos offers the most striking illustration of our inadequacy, it is equally important to note that the problem affects those non-urban classrooms where children have not shared in the advantages associated with the middle-class life style. In the absence of well-developed teaching strategies, the teacher who seeks to deal with the special problems of the disadvantaged must face the fact that he can call upon few resources beyond his own in approaching the task. It is not unreasonable to assume that universities, particularly the academic departments, represent a potential source of strategies for treating disadvantaged youth.

Eighty to ninety per cent of teacher preparation is in the hands of the academic instructors or subject matter specialists. Some of these college professors have little or no actual contact with the classroom situations their students will face as teachers. Except for the college instructor who is supervising the student teaching many, if not most, professors heavily involved in preparing teachers for their classroom roles have little first-hand information or experience as to the actual problems of teaching the inner city youngster or the rural poor. Consequently, training programs for prospective teachers remain ineffective, inadequate, and irrelevant. Further, the nature of his institution tends to concentrate his professional contact on the products of advantaged society. Moreover, neither the school nor the university has succeeded in establishing a climate in which the college professor has ready access to the public school classroom. There is need for a vehicle which encourages the scholar to experience at first hand the problems of teaching disadvantaged youth. Once he has experienced the dimensions of the problem, then the frame of reference of his discipline may enable him to contribute new and effective solutions.

Paul Goodman has pointed out that few teachers are the embodiment of their own subject matter and objectives. They seldom represent the competency model of the excited scholar-teacher with whom the young learners may identify. While students testify to the importance of education in our credential society, they simultaneously and loudly complain that there is nothing so boring as school. One reason is that teachers in elementary and secondary schools often lack the authenticity and excitement of scholarship and appear as bored as their students. By bringing in the university scholar, the authority in his field, or the author of the definitive text it was expected that youngsters would be moved to identify with the competency model of the scholar and be excited to learn. It is doubtful that the non-intellectual teacher who is merely holding down a steady job and who projects a less than intellectual image to his students can produce anything better than a third or second rate student-scholar. The addition of popular use of the paraprofessional in today's classroom may provide needed help for and better communication with the deprived learners but they do not extend the image or model of the scholar. The college professor who has attained a measure of success as an authority in his field can beam the image of the super-scholar with which to identify. We shall see how some of the professors caught the interests and imaginations of their young learners in the elementary and high schools.

II

Aware of such problems, both the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) and the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) expressed interest in a pilot study to offer college professors a clinical experience with disadvantaged youth in the public schools. The NDEA National Institute for Advanced Study in Teaching Disadvantaged Youth, which has sought to strengthen the qualifications of teachers of the disadvantaged by means of programs initiated through the leadership of university scholars and professional educators, agreed to sponsor such a study. Accordingly, the Thirteen Professors Project was formed and the folllowing objectives proposed:

- To provide classroom teaching experience for a selected group of college professors representing various subject matter fields.
- To elicit recommendations for improving undergraduate teacher education in both the subject matter and the methods areas, based on such teaching experiences with youngsters from disadvantaged areas.
- To draw up general and specific recommendations for improving current models for teacher preparation based on the combined experiences and thinking of all college professors

and their hosting teachers in whose schools and classrooms they practiced.

To achieve these objectives NESDEC and NEBHE located a group of university scholars and public school systems receptive to the idea of participating in a pilot study. This group met for the first time February 1, 1967, when the objectives were discussed and the mode of operation clarified.

Specific arrangements for teaching schedules were to be developed by the individual professors in cooperation with the hosting schools. Ground rules were kept to a minimum: the students involved had to represent the category "disadvantaged," but this was defined broadly enough to encompass children of low motivation or achievement as well as those from areas of social or economic deprivation. While the professors were expected to submit a written report on the basis of their experience in the classroom, they had no obligation to produce specifications for teacher training programs. The project consciously avoided any attempt to specify what the professors "should" find in the course of their clinical experience. It was felt to be more important to learn what new insights the scholar, trained in a frame of reference usually limited to the university setting, and more narrowly to a subject matter field, would bring to the problem of teaching disadvantaged youngsters at the elementary and secondary level.

The thirteen professors elected to teach in a variety of grades. Two professors taught fifth grade classes in the elementary school. The remaining eleven spread themselves through the secondary school with a skewness toward the upper grades of the high school. Seven of the participants taught in the history area: world history, American history, and social studies in the elementary school. Six participants taught in the field of English; in two of the English classes the emphasis was on linguistics. The time exposure in the classes ranged from two weeks to twelve weeks. In several cases the professors taught several sections.

Since the term *disadvantaged youth* was open to a broad range of interpretation, the professor's first task was to select, with the help of the cooperating school officials, an appropriate group of students to teach. While existing procedures in the cooperating school undoubtedly influenced this selection, the professor was reasonably free to follow the dictates of his own perception of the clinical experience.

In most cases the professor assumed temporary responsibility for an appropriate existing group; in two instances a special group was formed with reference to the project goals. In one of the exceptional cases the professor concluded that it would have been more satisfactory to work with a previously established group, for the introduction of unfamiliar classmates, the uncertainties of a new teacher, strange subject and manner of presentation, contributed to a less settled atmosphere than might have been desired. The second exception involved drawing together a subset of a regular class in order to meet the general criterion of disadvantaged. In this case it was concluded that the division of the class was beneficial to the members remaining in the original class, as well as to those in the newly-formed group.

Two of the existing classes had been selected to conform to specified guidelines of ongoing federal programs: an Upward Bound class under the aegis of the Office of Economic Opportunity; a basic English class formed under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Others had been drawn in conformity to what might be viewed as the urban condition; in Boston, Providence, Hartford, and New Haven the classes reflected conditions typical of the service area of the urban school. In one case the class had been selected on the basis of low school performance; it consisted entirely of "reluctant learners," so characterized by the school because for a variety of reasons these students had not been able to cope with the school program.

If a common denominator exists from an inventory of student characteristics within each class, it is in the area of "hard-to-teach" mixture of low academic performers reflecting low socio-economic status. The rural disadvantaged child often "suffers from cultural deprivation more than from poverty," while the ghetto child lives amid dreadful social realities which include physical as well as spiritual deprivation. In one class of disadvantaged youngsters the I.Q. range was 63 to 92; in yet another it was 94 to 128. One urban class was predominantly Caucasian; the participating class in another city consisted of all Negroes with but one exception. Some indication of the variety of students involved may be drawn from the following description of three of the classes.

NOTE: From this point on in the publication, all comment by Dr. Kvaraceus is set to the right in a shaded box. The remaining material is quoted directly from the professors.

There were 22 pupils in the class: 16 Caucasians, 5 Negroes, and 1 Oriental. The class is of *B* level. Levels are designated according to scores of Cooperative Reading Tests and of I.Q. tests, and the reading test is the more important. Most students in this group scored in the *C* category on the reading test. The group as a whole, according to Mrs. Emmert—and I would tend to concur on the basis of my experience—is characterized by a general lack of cultural and travel experiences. Only about 5 of the 22, for example, had ever been to Boston, less than 45 miles away from Providence. In all fairness, though, they are for the most part extremely responsive to any new experiences that the teacher or the school can provide. The class I.Q. would average about 100. The lowest score is 94 and the highest is 114.

So far as the family circumstance is concerned, the largest number of children in any pupil's family is eleven, and the smallest is one. Several come from homes in which there is only one parent—the result of death, separation, or divorce. On the basis of the information I have, I should guess that only one comes from a home where

a parent is a college graduate, only two have siblings who are at present in college, and one of those two has a sibling who has been graduated. Only one pupil (not, by the way, one of the two mentioned in the preceding sentence) has evinced to Mrs. Emmert any desire to attend college. I mention this last point not because it is significant in itself—I feel sure, for example, that in another year or so many more will evince such desires—but to indicate the generally low level of motivation present in this class.

In summary, then, not all the members of the class are economically disadvantaged, although many are; not all of the members of this class are socially disadvantaged, although many are; not all of the members of this class are culturally disadvantaged, although most are; but almost every pupil in the class seems to have a low level of motivation and, either as cause or effect, a low level of achievement.

*

My class (Class A) had 26 students. Twenty students were Negro and 6 white. Eight of the students were new to the school, 6 of them having recently moved to Hartford from the Southern United States or Jamaica. Generally the students come from lower income bracket areas, but they are not residents of Hartford's Negro ghetto area. The attitude of the students toward their studies was characterized as one of "hardened disinterest." The peer group is basically anti-education, but the general ability level of the students may accurately be called average.

*

There were 12 boys, 13 girls in the class. Three of the 25 came from Navy families—modern migrants whose previous schooling had been in two year stretches in far distant places, from which they had moved nearly always in the middle of the school year. Four of the class were of rural, coastal Maine families who had not left the immediate area of Brunswick, except for brief trips, for generations. Four of the 25 were of French Canadian extraction; none of these, however, reported French as the primary language spoken at home: "French is what our grandparents speak." The I.Q. range (short-form Otis) was 94-128; the median 106. Seven of the 25 were from divorced homes; 6 of the 7, however, made their homes with a remarried parent. Three had been assigned Bowdoin College "big brothers" (read: inadequate or nonexistent male figures in their home backgrounds). Personality types, physical and social maturity were as varied as only an eighth grade class can be. The only nearly consistent patterns which emerged from an examination of their cumulative record cards was a heavy preponderance of blue-collar parental occupational status and a slightly lower than average parental educational level.

That the other classes differ from these and from each other, simply emphasizes the variety of answers developed to the question: "Who to teach?"

Having selected the class to be taught, each professor then had to determine the material to be presented. The cooperating teachers provided basic information on course objectives and student progress, but each professor was free to develop his own curriculum unit for the clinical experience. While some were able to teach largely within the framework already established by the cooperating teacher, the special interest of the professors and their unique perception of the instructional task resulted in a number of curricular innvotations. The following objectives give some sense of the variety of curriculums employed:

- to develop the student's powers of inquiry through analysis of the anti-Negro bias in American history texts
- to develop an understanding of the historical concept of revolution through an examination of school procedures which the students wished to change
- to develop sensitivity to current American attitudes toward race and culture through the use of new materials developed in a university-based curriculum project
- to provide a measure of understanding and (perhaps, consequently) control of their beliefs about language prejudices by making the students aware of their own intuitive perceptions about language usage
- to develop an awareness of cultural attitudes through an examination of the treatment of Nisei during World War II
- to teach the structure of language through an examination of constructs in an unfamiliar language, Swahili
- to develop an active concern for African history and culture through participation in a simulated constitutional convention for Nigeria.

On the whole the professors assumed that while the disadvantaged child has not learned the formal curriculum, he does have a very real, although underdeveloped, frame of reference within which to organize the learning experience. Furthermore, the child will be able to develop this frame of reference

in the context of a curriculum which employs intelligible instructional materials that are relevant to his situation. It is not likely that these assumptions were formed in the brief interval for observation between the initiation of the project and the beginning of the clinical experience. More probably, each professor came equipped with his own answer to the question: "What to teach?"

Neither the teaching schedule nor the technique of presentation was subject to any real control by the project. In a few cases it was possible to arrange for an intensive daily clinical experience, but others were scheduled at intervals over a period of weeks or months. With few exceptions, the professor brought with him little or no formal training in pedagogy, and therefore he was not testing any well-developed hypothesis on the presentation of his material. It is particularly interesting to note the pedagogical conclusions which some of the professors drew from their own first exposure to the act of teaching in a public school environment. While their findings include many insights into the nature of disadvantaged youth, they also present some pedagogical recommendations based on their experiments with methods of teaching.

At the close of the teaching experience each participant prepared a written report. In addition, a one-day debriefing session was held May 31, 1967, a session which included both the professors and their counterparts in the public schools. The thirteen individual reports and the discussion which they prompted at the May meeting constitute the substance of The Thirteen Professors Project. This composite report should make it very clear that the project did not develop a satisfactory answer to the question: "How does one teach disadvantaged youth?" On the other hand, however, it does provide some insights to the question: "What can we learn about teaching disadvantaged youth if we provide university scholars with a clinical experience in the schools?"

III

Professors' Perceptions of Their Pupils

Most professors perceive their pupils in positive terms. They object to the label of *disadvantage* and dismissed it as a "shoddy one." Instead of watering down their materials they consciously try to lift their young students' motivations and interests up to the level of their own special content. They look for and find strengths on which they try to build learning experiences. They speak against the artificiality and, especially, against the implicit condescension to be found in much of the materials and methods that have been specially prepared for this group of learners. They question the basic assumption that the so-called disadvantaged really represent any fundamental or basic learning-teaching problem differing in kind from the problems that are faced at the college level. Some are appalled by the climate in which learning is fostered.

"Once there was a fighter that was the champion of the whole world. He had fights with everybody in the city. Then he had to go to another city. He took an airplane. It took him two days. It was Friday. He got off the plane and went to the hotel. Then it was time for the fight. It was on. He got knocked out in the first round.
The Moral: "There is always somebody that can beat you."

The Negro fifth-grader who wrote this fable was a member of a class of youngsters, all but one of them Negro, with whom I worked for two hours a day over a two week period in March. Like most of his fellows, the author of this fable reads at a level far below the national average for students of his age, and like them his spelling is atrocious. I have corrected it here. But I have not tampered with anything else. The prose is his, and so is the wisdom.

What I learned from this writer and his classmates is what all of us know, but must (I suppose) be reminded of repeatedly: that *disadvantaged students*—the phrase seems to me a shoddy one—are as bright as anyone else,

that they have creative energies that can be quickened into life, that the deadening of their spirits and intellects is a national catastrophe. And I learned something more: that the dreadful social realities in which disadvantaged youngsters live deprive them of a great deal but also give them a quickness and a sense of experience which can be turned to positive uses by teachers. I don't want to wax poetic about these deprived and ill-educated kids; they have it tough. But it is also true—so I have come to suspect after two weeks of trying to teach them—it is also true that they have in turn (most of them, anyway) a toughness of their own, a toughness that is partly intellectual and that may distinguish them in favorable ways from students from more tranquil social backgrounds. I would be outraged if these remarks were used to justify slums. And I trust I won't be misunderstood when I suggest that the hard, melancholy, adult wisdom of my fabalist—"There is always somebody who can beat you"—would perhaps be more startling still, more unexpected, in a fifth-grader from one of our *better* neighborhoods and academically superior schools.

Though it is essential to admit that my glimpse of these students was very brief and hardly decisive, I feel rather strongly that these children, far more than most, are hard to fool. They have a sure sense of the phony and the insincere; they know cant when they see it. It is possible that I discovered in my teaching only what my prejudices wanted me to discover, but I think not. I really feel that the fifth-graders I worked with possessed a kind of maturity which makes teaching them at once difficult and rewarding.

A Harvard professor looks in on his school and expresses his concerns for the learning habitat and for the silence and straight lines that are built in to the students. "If the halls could become classrooms", he suggests, "learning would be better served."

Prior to my twelve weeks in Roxbury I had visited but one Boston school, a lower middle-class junior high school in, I believe, Roslindale. The building was old but polished, the students young but cowed. The student marshal met me through the locked door, officiously conducted me to the principal. The students moved from class to class sullenly in straight lines; those few who broke ranks who talked—the teachers barked them into order and silence. This, I was told, is a Boston school, any Boston school. I had thus expected much the same at the Lewis school except I was sure that the building would be older and not polished but run down.

It was. It was crummy. Its windows were broken, its plaster was cracked, its paint old and faded, it was too hot or too cold, it was filthy. The street and air noise was unbelievable: it lies exposed to an MTA elevated line and beneath a Logan air corridor. But yet no door guardian ever took me on the long march to the principal's office (even though a wonderful sign ordered all ye who enter, visitors and contractors alike—one wonders if a contractor can be a visitor—to report straightway to the office). I moved freely through the halls and so did the students, for though I heard teachers calling for straight lines (in the old Roslindale school the straight lines were built into the tile floors and thus into the students—there are some advantages even in an old and crummy school) and order and silence, I am happy to report that the moving from class to class at the Lewis school was as free and happy as that at my daughter's school, the Friends School in Cambridge.

But this moving that is learning and living is surely not tolerated in the classroom. In there there is silence and desks all in a row. Schools and teachers should keep the adult and crushing, busy, straight line world away from children. Teachers are the adults kept around the school to help children do what they want to do, to guide them around and over the many intervening obstacles to what they want to know. (See Lynn Richardson's *In the early world*. Wellington, New Zealand, 1964.)

If the halls could become classrooms, learning would be better served.

The classroom in the inner-city slum school or in the rural poverty belts can reflect insecurity for the student, but it can also reflect insecurity and fear on the part of the teacher. Here is an insight concerning the development of social insecurity on the part of the learner which may stem from a curricular attempt to change or modify established language patterns.

We hear much these days about the language of the deprived: how to change it and replace it. I would much prefer to bring students to an awareness of what their language is and how to use it. One is freed in language, partially at least, through becoming aware of what society feels and thinks about language, aware of what you yourself, willy-nilly, think and feel about it. A forced change of dialect simply reinforces the social insecurity of the deprived. It is neither a fair nor reasonable thing to do. Less importantly, it is not apparent that mass dialect change can be effected."

In contrast the following comments reveal the apprehensions, the uncertainties, the fears that beset the professors as they contemplated their entry and first encounter with their public school classes.

I readied myself for my first day of teaching this secondary school class by devoting far more hours of preparation than any classroom hour at the university has ever demanded. Despite this thorough preparation (*thorough* is, actually, an understatement), I dosed myself liberally

with Librium before I sallied forth. Indeed, and I am not too ashamed to admit it, I had been in that classroom four or five times before I ventured into it untranquillized.

Naturally, as any teacher will have guessed, the first class period was far too short. I accomplished less than half the work that I had intended to cover. I salved my conscience by murmuring to myself that the first day is always the hardest, but I should be something less than candid were I not to admit that I never covered in any class period as much as I had intended to.

> Another professor uses name cards to individualize his students, and blue books as an individual repository of what is being learned.

Prior to meeting with the class by myself I had an opportunity to observe them in action—and I mean this quite literally—with Mr. William MacDonald, their regular social studies teacher. They were a most interesting group who were described to me as being *reluctant learners*. Some of these youngsters were very bright but had emotional problems, and others had limited ability. In any event none of them had distinguished himself academically. It was not without considerable misgiving that I embarked upon this project.

Since I had a limited time to work with these students it was obvious that I must establish rapport with them as soon as possible. Mr. MacDonald, who was my mentor, supplied me with a list of class members, and I had name cards of the type worn at conferences prepared for each student. This attempt to recognize them as individuals at the outset proved very effective. In fact, when they discovered that they could keep these cards, they wore them to subsequent classes and even in the cafeteria.

Each student was also given a blue book of the type used for examination purposes in many colleges. It was explained to them that these books were to be used to record notes on important events, significant concepts, conclusions, and any other information which would give structure and direction to the material to be considered during our deliberations. Taking notes seemed to appeal to them as a novel idea, and what they lacked in skill was more than compensated by the seriousness with which most of them filled in at least one page during the period we were together. I suspect that the familiar sights of students taking a few notes tied into my own security needs as I embarked on this new and challenging experience.

> After one look at his class, another professor concludes that some other approach than lecturing would be needed if he is to deal effectively with his group of boys and girls.

My initial observations of the class had made me quite aware that if I were to achieve a modicum of success in my work with them I would have to change my ways—and rather markedly. It was not clear to me in what ways I should change, but it was clear that lecturing to large sections of elderly college students was not the kind of experience which prepared one to deal most effectively with a group of hyperactive, pubescent boys and girls.

> Several professors soon discovered the fact that many of their new students did not want to be discovered without an answer, even if it was the wrong one. The tendency to invent answers or "to make up history" appeared as a face-saving device.

Some students, in attempting to provide a sequence of events in their discussion of an issue, would makeup history to suit their own purposes. This seem to be symptomatic of a condition which I observed to be rather general: any answer inaccurate, or irrelevant—was better than admitting one had no answer. On several occasions I suggested that we think a few minutes before offering solutions to a problem. Before a minute was up there would be half a dozen hands waving frantically in front of me. Such students were certainly motivated, but the motivation had little relation to the problem being considered. Apparently, frantically waving hands may be as much a sign of insecurity as a sign of enthusiasm and involvement.

> Another professor reports the tendency of his students to guess wildly when put on their own or when forced beyond the rote memorization of knowledge.

Continuing in this somewhat subjective vein, let me attempt to describe some of the characteristics of hidden disadvantage. I found that while students were able to parrot both traditional and structural definitions for the parts of speech, they guessed wildly when asked to identify the function of a given word in a particular sentence. English grammar was a game without logic or rules for most of my students. To the extent that I was able to blame this parroting on inadequate materials, poor instructional techniques, or inadequate understanding of recent advances in linguistics on the part of teachers and students alike—and these charges may be brought with justice against all but a handful of schools (and colleges and graduate schools as well)—I was not upset. At Bowdoin we have recently required our students preparing to teach English in the schools to take one or more courses in structural linguistics. Our assumption had been that if a teacher really knew his stuff, he could teach it. I found this is not so. Not even sophisticated instruction is proof against the student who tells you "I'm going to quit school when I reach seventeen . . . I can get a job at the shoe shop . . . That's all the money you need anyway."

> A Yale professor expresses his deep concern for making a special case of the disadvantaged and points out the

dangers that can mount as materials and methods are downgraded to accommodate the deprived child. This professor finds that teaching English at the fifth grade level is not different in kind from teaching English to Yale students.

I want to offer some reflections about reading matter and about general attitudes toward the job of teaching the disadvantaged.

A significant fact about my students' response to what I read to them was that Homer (the Cyclops episode from the *Odyssey*) and Hemingway (his story, "The Killers") seemed to generate more interest and enthusiasm than Aesop or Kipling. There was no reading that was a complete failure, but I do feel that the relatively more complex and serious literature appealed more directly to the students. I should qualify this statement by admitting that I over-reached myself with a Chekhov story which depended on some subtleties that proved inaccessible to the class; that there are limits, it would be foolish to deny. But the essential fact still seems to me to be that the authenticity and resonance of real literature can be perceived by students in the lower grades.

Though they could hardly explain why this is so, these students (or so I believe) respond to stories which are founded on genuine perceptions into human life far more readily than they do to clever concoctions written specifically for them. I believe they recognize and react against the artificiality and condescension that is built into so many of the so-called stories that are written with young readers exclusively in mind. It would seem to me that reading texts, even for the very youngest grades, ought to draw on genuine literature instead of the usual saccharine fare that constitutes the basic matter of most grade school reading books. *I don't believe that providing illustrations* which recognize the existence of minority groups is any kind of an answer. These kids, within limits which I acknowledge, know what is genuine when they see it. I believe they are more likely to find the job of learning to read more exciting if what they are asked to read is true in the way that only real literature is true.

Related to this question about reading matter is a much larger question which seems to me of crucial importance. The very existence of this report, aimed at discussing educational problems unique to the *disadvantaged*, is, perhaps, evidence of a frame of mind that can lead us all into bad mistakes. Though any serious teacher must be aware of the influences outside the classroom which are shaping his students and are competing for their attention, it seems to me that we must recognize that such an awareness must not come to dominate either how a teacher works or what he teaches. If certain kinds of reading matter betray an attitude of condescension toward students, an overly-acute awareness of the special liabilities with which the teachers of the disadvantaged must contend can lead to an even more debilitating kind of intellectual condescension.

I heard talk from some of the teachers in the New Haven grammar school in which I taught my fifth-grade class, to the effect that traditional subjects like mathematics or history were unlikely to interest these slum children. According to these well-meaning teachers, everything that is taught must meet the children on their own ground, must take direct account of the facts of their environment and special psychological circumstances. I understand and even in some degree sympathize with this argument. But I also fear it. For behind this concern for the appalling conditions in which these students live is a terrible kind of condescension which, it seems to me, is potentially subversive of true education. These students have minds, and those minds can be stretched and exercised. However difficult that is to accomplish, we must assume that it can be done.

And, moreover, I am not really sure that the difficulties which confront teachers of the disadvantaged are actually different in kind from the difficulties which confront all teachers at all levels of education. As a teacher at Yale I must cope with the inattention of my students, and with their suspicions that my subject has no relevance or interest for them. And I must compete with a variety of outside distractions—sexual daydreams, extracurricular activities, family problems, psychological eccentricities—which threaten the life of my teaching. I found essentially the same kind of situation in that fifth grade class. The students' attention span was far shorter, their presence in the classroom was enforced, they had much larger and more overt reservoirs of resentment against what I was trying to do—but for all of this, I see no essential difference in the kind of problem I faced as a teacher. It was, I am convinced, a matter of degree.

As a practical matter, in any event, it seems to me that some such ground-assumption must lie at the base of all our plans for teaching the disadvantaged. For surely it is a kind of madness to assume that there is anything much a teacher can *do* about a student's environment, except by setting an example which offers alternatives to some of the more dreadful modes of life which the ghetto seems to promise and to value. That is to say: even if I am wrong and there are fundamental problems that are unique to educating the disadvantaged, I believe we must *act as if* this were not the case. We must act as if the problems which face us in the ghetto are simply more urgent and insistent, but the same *in kind*, as the problems which face us in education elsewhere.

Episodes in Teaching and Learning

A number of professors indicate that they planned carefully for their classes and structured their approaches only to abandon this approach to a more

spontaneous seizure of the "teachable moment." Since the professors were full of their subject and since many of them had made elaborate preparations, it is difficult to accept spontaneity as the sign of the workable method. There is general agreement on the need to activate the student and to prevent him from becoming silent, passive, and the listening partner in the learning process. What comes through in the professor's reports is their own interest in their subject and their strong belief in the pupil's ability to become interested in the same materials.

I felt my most successful teaching was not that which was most scholarly and well-planned, but that which was most spontaneous on my part and thereby caught the class imagination. Only when I threw myself into the part I was trying to teach did I feel I had their full attention. What sticks most in my mind was a lackluster discussion on the fluidity of American society in the mid-nineteenth century. When a student expressed his inability to understand why a European aristocrat could not perpetuate his status in the U.S., I had the boy imagine himself a frontier farmer in Iowa who had grubbed out a dirt farm, lived in a sod shanty, and existed on a bare subsistence income. Then I played the role of an aristocrat demanding of him work, fees, shares of his produce. The student grew more indigant until he demanded to know whom I thought I was and (figuratively) shot me dead on the spot—which was precisely the point of personal status and private rights I could have made more academically, but less effectively.

One's class preparations then, must not be restricted to data and its relevance alone, but how to present it most effectively. There occur natural "ham" situations where a teacher can "play it up," and this he should do; but it has its dangers. When the class studied the institution of slavery in the *ante bellum* South, I tried to portray the slave quarters and jocularly suggested they were similar to modern tourist cabins or motels. Sure enough, on the next test, one of my students had the slaves housed in motels—an example of "present-mindedness," among other things.

Another professor reports the need for a "flexible approach" and the values of a liberal arts education covering a wide range of discussion in handling classroom discussions.

I went into the first class well prepared, with a highly structured outline which moved with ponderous grandeur from one point to the next to an inspiring conclusion timed to coincide with the bell. The class made a hash of this in no time. There is absolutely no telling where the class discussion will lead. Owing to the spontaneous nature of the students and to their lack of intellectual discipline, discussion can range over an astonishing and embarrassingly wide range of topics. The teacher must be well prepared, but totally flexible in his approach. If ever there was a case made for liberal arts education this is it.

But beyond the varied content, the challenge to the teacher is apparent: he must skillfully direct his comments and questions, and encourage all the spontaneous participation, yet never let the discussion get out of hand. This places a premium upon the teacher's ability to direct a discussion, very difficult under the best of circumstances. It is all the more difficult when one must be aware continually of one's vocabulary and manner of speech. I had the tendency to talk too fast (the students complained). Furthermore, I had to be aware constantly that I might use words that were beyond their comprehension. Thus I would rephrase my comments and questions in my mind even while I was trying to select the proper ones to make; the results were sometimes chaotic.

One professor combines spontaneity with structure, leading the student to some genuine insights. "Rigidly organized teaching schedules" he submits, "are very dangerous."

All of my projects and experiments were aimed at getting the students to engage literary experience from a variety of perspectives. My general notion was to indicate in some way that imaginative literature can be interesting and valuable. It is far from clear, of course, that any such grand generalization would make sense to the students; but it was clear, I think, that they did respond, often with real passion, to the literary and dramatic exercises we devised together.

Although I was resolved from the first to remain flexible in my approach, I did manage to maintain a rough sort of progression in our work. This progression was of two kinds: we started with relatively simple kinds of literary expression—animal fables by Aesop and Kipling—and progressed to more sophisticated forms, ending with stories by Chekhov and Hemingway. In the second place, I tried to control our sessions so that, as we continued, the opportunities for active participation by the class in our literary exercises increased substantially. By the end of our time together, the students were writing short dramatic scenes and then acting roles in them in front of the class. And of course the more actively engaged the students were, the more enthusiastic and responsive they became.

But I tried from the beginning to keep the students from being entirely passive about the material. I concluded nearly every class by assigning a piece of writing to them, always a piece whose outlines resembled those of the work I had been reading to them earlier that day. Thus, on one day I read and discussed with them several Aesop fables, and then had them write an animal fable of their own at the end of class. Many students resented this

writing assignment, and I must say that the majority of their stories were of depressingly low quality: the simplest problems of syntax and grammar were often too difficult for them. But even so, their writing assignments did show one sort of improvement: they grew considerably longer, and even a shade more coherent, as our sessions continued. This was perhaps due to the fact that I allowed somewhat more time for these assignments in later sessions, but it was also in part, I think, simply a result of the fact that these imaginative exercises became less difficult and more familiar to them as time went on.

Some of my most successful moments with the class were entirely unplanned, and this fact confirmed me in my conviction—born in my experience in teaching at the college level—that rigidly organized teaching schedules are very dangerous. One day, on a whim, I began by suggesting that we try to tell a spontaneous story. I would ask one student to supply two or three sentences, and then call on another to continue the narrative where his fellow had left off. In several ways this group story was dazzling success: the story they invented concerned a giant who stood out in the schoolyard defying various authorities including (in this order) teachers, the school principal, the army, and the airforce. Virtually every student in the class got deeply caught up in this story; they passionately waved their hands trying to get my attention; they were particularly inventive when their giant was threatened. One boy brought a brother and sister giant to the aid of the beleagured fellow we had started with; another described how one of these rebel giants, attacked by a plane, reached into the sky with his huge hand, grabbed the plane out of the air and smashed it to the pavement.

What had happened, of course, was obvious, but not less exciting because it was obvious. By chance we had stumbled into a fiction that engaged their own deep resentments of authority and the very fact of those resentments gave a vitality and an imaginative vigor to their inventions.

The class always responded with almost universal passion and interest to exercises which had a spontaneous air about them. In our final days together we spent most of our time acting out plays the class had written the day before. We tape-recorded their efforts, and the class was, as one might expect, delighted to hear itself on the tape. (This device has obvious uses in speech-improvement projects, and I assume it is widely used. My own experience merely confirms the value of this practice.) But although the dramatic scenes the students acted out from written texts (I would mimeograph their best efforts from the day before and distribute them as scripts) were successful, and although all the students—even several whose lethargy was notorious—were desperately eager to take parts in these plays, our most effective dramas were not written out, but done spontaneously by volunteer students who would develop a theme or situation I suggested to them before they began. These students, I suppose, like most youngsters, are deeply theatrical: they love to act roles; and they acted best, with passion and conviction and obvious joy, when they were not tied to a script. This was in part a consequence of their poor reading abilities: the effort simply to make sense of the words in a script distracted them from the dramatic qualities of their plays. But it was still more a consequence of their response to what is unplanned and apparently spontaneous.

The Shakespearean scholar from Brown University provides a day-to-day picture of his activities in the classroom and the pupils' responses to his efforts.

The days went on. I gave short quizzes on vocabulary and other matters which I considered germane, and religiously returned the corrected and graded quizzes at the class session following the one during which they had been tested. The results of the first quiz were disastrous. The results of the others were slightly less than brilliant, but I felt that I saw some improvement when I noted that no pupil received a zero on either of the last two quizzes. Mrs. Emmert generously devoted some of her classroom time to playing the Caedmon records of the play. I felt that I had so little time to spend in the classroom that I didn't want to share it even with the Shakespearean Recording Society, although I was and am aware how valuable the listening experience can be. Finally we managed to finish *Julius Caesar,* even though the fourth and fifth acts received extremely short shrift. I think, although I am not sure, that the pupils in the class learned something; I know for a certainty that I learned a great deal—and even a teacher's soul is worth saving.

Although I sound like one of Pollyanna's lineal descendants when I say so, each day in the classroom made the next day far easier and much more rewarding for me and, hopefully, for the students. By the third or fourth class session, I was able to call each pupil by name without reference to the seating plan which Mrs. Emmert had thoughtfully prepared for me. Because of this seemingly minor accomplishment, the class sessions became more relaxed, and (if you'll pardon the term) a greater rapport was established between class and teacher. At first some of the students were—to steal a phrase from Herman Hickman—sullen if not mutinous. By the end I felt that the sullenness had disappeared; and if the sullenness had not been replaced with complete cooperation, it had at least been replaced with acceptance.

Before long the Shakespearean scholar is invited to speak to several other high school groups and to participate in an assembly program. His account of these experiences and his reactions follow.

While I was at Hope High School teaching the *disadvantaged* tenth-grade class, some four classes of twelfth graders (presumably from college divisions) were getting ready to attend a performance of *Julius Caesar* at the

American Shakespeare Festival Theater at Stratford, Connecticut. The day before they went to Stratford, I talked to one class of about 35 on the Elizabethan world picture, with particular reference to the concept of "degree" and the "great chain of being." Following that, I talked to an assembly of the four classes (about 130 students) on *Julius Caesar*. I did so for two reasons: my innate and natural desire to be helpful; and a wish to attempt to discover the necessary differences of approach between a disadvantaged group and a college preparatory group. My conclusions as the result of the experiment are neither startling nor new. The tenth graders simply cannot be lectured at. They must be brought continuously into the discussion; they must matter, and to them the material to be covered is of secondary importance. If they do not contribute to the discussion, attention tends to flag. Some, it is true, maintain attention even though they always remain silent, but they do not maintain it if only the teacher is talking; their classmates, if not they, must be in on the discussion. The twelfth graders, on the other hand, stunned me by their rapt attention. They seemed to be far more interested in the material than in themselves. The extent of their participation (both in the group of 35 and the larger group of 130) consisted of an occasional question, and that only to clarify some matter. I found teaching both groups a delightful experience, but teaching the tenth graders with their shorter attention span and their crucial need for identity was infinitely more difficult and infinitely more challenging. It was also infinitely harder on the nerves.

How one professor utilized the strengths of his students and stimulated self-initiated discovery and insight in the study of the Negro American and his treatment in the standard history texts can be gleaned from the following excerpt.

Our goal was to bring about greater knowledge of the Negro American, and of his treatment in standard American histories, through an approach that stressed the acquisition of inquiry skills. We were able to build on some strengths that our students brought to the study. For example, one of our first tasks was to get students ready to think of the academic enterprise in terms of self-initiated discovery and insight. Having the students scrutinize the pictures of a textbook's chapter on reconstruction, before reading the chapter itself, helped provide this mental set. For while the subtleties of the written word may have escaped our students, they were keenly aware of the same subtleties when presented visually. It didn't take long for them to see assumptions and implications (including some which had escaped me) of a sketch depicting three members of the Freedmen's Bureau, all white, seated in semi-circular fashion, while, in the background, stood a group of "shuffling" Negro supplicants. Nor was the point lost when they realized that another picture, from the same historical period, which I had shown them, portraying a well-dressed Negro addressing a legislative body composed of Negroes and whites, was not to be found in the text under consideration. When they did read the chapter, they were mentally set for the realization that authors of historical works are "flesh and blood" people; they marshal evidence to support their interpretations and viewpoints and are guided by assumptions of the general culture in which they live.

Another student strength that we tried to capitalize on was their ability and delight in internalizing and dramatizing an historical situation. Our students became congressmen of 1866 and were asked to design appropriate policy for the crisis presented by the South and the freedom. A civil rights and educational program was gradually sketched out. Debate ensued as to how to treat the defeated Southerners with respect to their political status. (The measure finally "passed" was somewhat more stringent than that set forth in the actual Reconstruction program of 1867.) Several "congressmen" demanded land for freedom on the grounds that the maintenance of political independence would be otherwise lost through economic dependence.

Now they were ready to read about the Radical plan for reconstruction. The appropriate section was captioned "The Radical Republicans Insisted on a Harsh Policy of Reconstruction" and the thesis maintained therein was that this insistence was because "congressional leaders intended to punish the South." The reaction of our students to this was that either congressional leaders were "babes in the woods," when it came to designing punitive measures, or that the textbook's thesis was unwarranted. After all, our classroom "congressmen" had designed a "harsher" policy—on grounds of equity and need, not vindictiveness.

It is readily seen that the above illustrations all deal with the era of Reconstruction. All our work thus far has been in this area. In fact, we began with close scrutiny of one text's treatment of the subject. This teacher-led analysis is now being supplanted by three-man student groups analyzing other texts' assessment of the Negro during the Reconstruction period. There is little doubt in my mind that they will be quite capable of undertaking this task, judging from their scathing critique of the following excerpt:

> "From the point of view of the South, one of the the major problems was how best to control the Negroes. Of course, many Negroes, after they became free, voluntarily stayed on the plantations of their former masters as free laborers. But many others were unable to resist trying out their new freedom. They wandered away from their homes, often abandoning their families; and they frequently left their jobs without warning just when their labor was most needed to harvest a crop. Without experience in caring for themselves, many could not make a living and suffered greatly. Others turned to crime."

The appropriate teaching strategy is contained implicity in the objectives. To tell the students about the treatment of the Negro in American history textbooks, either by a teacher's analysis of the textbook under inspection, or by having them read a special study such as Irving Sloan's recent *The Negro in Modern American History Textbooks,* misses the point. The development of inquiry skills is as central to the project as the exposé of a particular textbook's shortcomings, or even as the new sense of understanding of the role of the Negro American in our history that we hope will come about. Only inquiry itself can bring about the desired learning.

It is no secret that acquisition of such analytical abilities comes hard, and not only for disadvantaged youngsters, though it seems especially difficult for them. In a real way, it is alien to their learning style. For one thing, it is likely to be a highly verbal pastime, demanding close attention to nuances of language. Our students had had little experience in dissecting language and explanations. Then, too, such learning is highly developmental, demanding some concentration to discern value-loaded words and phrases; it means distinguishing between factual claims, generalizations, and explanations; it means uncovering and clarifying assumptions; it means understanding the role of evidence; above all, it means learning to ask questions, to join in dialogue with the work under study.

The Harvard University professor who taught linguistics at the junior high school level for an eleven week period discusses his aims, successes, and failures in the following account.

For eleven weeks, twice a week, I have taught ninth-graders at the Lewis school, Boston: eight weeks with an academic class; four weeks with a general class (there was one week during which I taught both classes). The two groups each averaged about twenty students. Though the general class was an integral one, the academic class was a voluntary group drawn from two academic ninth grades that happened to meet at precisely the same hour of the day, the same days of the week. The generally less settled atmosphere of the academic group *vis-a-vis* the general class was certainly a function of sudden conjunction of new teacher, unfamiliar classmates, strange subject and manner of presentation. In retrospect my decision to bring together on a voluntary basis and for so short a time, members of two different classes was not a wise one. Otherwise I suppose the groups that I taught were pretty much representative of the day-to-day business of the Lewis school.

What I tried to teach the classes was this: to have a measure of understanding and, perhaps consequently, control of their beliefs about language including their language prejudices. I was concerned to bring to the level of awareness what the students already knew of language: its socio-cultural ties, its relationship to other languages.

Notice that I was not concerned to discuss grammar in any of the popular or scientific senses of that word; *i.e.* neither as a set of linguistic rules in explanation of linguistic behavior, nor as a set of shibboleths, of social rules, in determination of sociolinguistic behavior. Rather was I determined that the students understand what they already had knowledge of: many, felt, ill-thought-out notions about and toward language and language differences.

Typically, then, we discussed in a rather straightforward manner a whole host of matters ranging from animal communication to social class differences. For example, rather early in my meetings with the first class (the academic group), I asked them if I was from Boston. No, they said, I was not. How do you know that? . . . Finally: the way you talk. Specifically? There was certainly much latent knowledge of this and other kinds available.

Is there any particular reason why this is a subject peculiarly appropriate to these students? I can not claim that there is; I would argue, however, that such understanding is important for all. For there is evidence that the socially-deprived are naive in language and that the privileged use their false beliefs about language to the disadvantage of the deprived. See, in this connection, 'The World Across the Street,' * wherein white teenagers tune out the taped Negro voices they hear as soon as they recognize them as the voices of the Negroes across the street (they identified them quite readily) and subsequently choose to hear only what supports their stereotype image of 'Negro.' The Negro teenagers, on the other hand, do not tune out the white teenagers, are not, in fact, sure about the voices they heard: not sure about race, age, location, etc. Prejudice and naiveté: both need to be schooled.

My success in this endeavor was clearly limited (if indeed there was any success at all in the direction I sought) One of my graduate students, having for another purpose developed a language attitude questionnaire, a crude attempt was made to gauge the differing language attitudes of (a) the volunteer 'academic' group at the end of my eight weeks with them—the questionnaire was not developed until that time, and the other members of the two academic classes who had not volunteered to meet with me; and (b) the general class before and after our four weeks of discussion. (The questionnaire exists in two forms.) Although I write without having administered the *after* questionnaire to the general class, the sets of questionnaires that I have looked at reveal no interesting differences between and among the various groups.

This was not unexpected. For there is no reason to believe that a few weeks of discussion will change deep-seated attitudes learnt early in life and continued steadily throughout it. Moreover, adolescents are not the most open-minded and rational of human beings on which to work change. Thus a vast majority of the students still believe, for example, that unless a student studies gram-

* "The World Across the Street." *Harvard Graduate School of Education Bulletin* 11:3-24; Fall 1966.

mar, his writing will probably be poor (a school-conditioned, system-justifying belief), and so on through a now trite catalogue of such misbeliefs—school and community derived.

So I clearly changed little that emerged from my rubbing. Yet a more basic level of success was attained in that when I rubbed, something important surfaced: the latent knowledge (to change the metaphor) "written in juice of Lemmon" became visible through—and thus available to—the fire of discussion: "I (was) not teaching (them) anything, only asking . . .

> Observe Meno, the stage he has reached on the path of recollection. At the beginning he did not know the side of the square of eight feet. Not indeed does he know it now, but then he thought he knew it and answered boldly, as was appropriate—he felt no perplexity. Now however he does feel perplexed. Not only does he not know the answer, he doesn't even think he knows . . . Isn't he in a better position now in relation to what he didn't know? . . . we have helped him to some extent towards finding out the right answer, for now not only is he ignorant of it but he will be glad to look for it.*

Perhaps we reached farther in our discussions than did Socrates in *The Meno,* for not only did we finally "recollect" some of what we knew; we also began to question the truth of our knowledge.

In any case the knowledge was there, obscurely there, excitingly there. To this extent our discussions were successful, difficult and exciting—and sometimes obscure.

A professor from Trinity College describes his efforts to interest Negro students in African history, its diversity, and the impact of colonialism on 19th Century Africa. Through simulation and the use of role playing he is able to excite the students to learn. Realistically he evaluates his own efforts for their lasting effects.

I made three general decisions about conducting the class. One was to seat the students in a semicircle to cut down talking and lack of attention. The second was to use more visual aids, particularly maps which would be important to the unit on Africa. The last was to have the students work on projects in class such as writing out answers to questions given on mimeographed sheets. The idea here was to make the students more active; to give them something to do in class even if they were reluctant to enter into discussion.

During the first week, I wanted the students to gain some idea of the size and diversity of Africa, to realize that African history did not suddenly begin when Europeans discovered the continent, and to get a basic understanding of why the European powers carved up Africa into colonies at the end of the nineteenth century. The general goal of the unit would be to study nineteenth and twentieth century Africa with an emphasis on the need for historical knowledge to understand the present.

I had the initial advantage, when I began teaching, of being new. I overheard one student exhort his fellows to "Give him a chance"! But basically the class performed as it had prior to my teaching: some were interested; others were not. I discovered that one fairly effective technique was to have each student work on his own map of Africa. We did several maps the first week showing the geography, peoples, and nineteenth century boundaries. The use of a transparency which projected a blank map onto a screen was an effective attention-getting device in both weeks of teaching. Even students who appeared uninterested actually did the map work accurately and neatly. I also found that by giving the students a sheet of several short questions based on the daily reading assignment most of them completed the task. For example, several turned in very complete and good definitions of imperialism which went beyond the definition given in the text.

Throughout this first week I emphasized basic facts about Africa, trying to repeat many of these facts again and again within the context of class discussion. I had discovered on the first day through a short questionnaire called "What do you know about Africa?" that most student knew virtually nothing about Africa. With one or two exceptions, Negro students knew no more about nor showed any more interest in Africa than their white classmates.

At the end of the first week I felt that the class did have some idea of the size and diversity of Africa and that it was an area of great importance today, but I cannot say that a great deal of interest had been created in the subject. But the stage had been set for the second week's work—a study of twentieth century Africa based on a case study of modern Nigeria.

I believe that the most effective way to highlight the importance of modern Africa and the difficulties being encountered by African states was to concentrate on one area or country. Nigeria was a natural choice because of its size, diversity, potential strengths, and present problems. The plan was to saturate the class with facts about Nigeria, and then to get the students to think as Nigerians about present problems. I emphasized, for example, the religious and tribal differences in the three main regions of the country. We talked again and again about the distrust and suspicions between these groups. The big questions was: Could these diverse groups make a country? By discussion, working on maps of Nigeria, answering assigned questions, and pushing the students to think in Nigerian terms, the class was gaining some knowledge of the country and at least a feeling for its immense problems.

During this second week I prepared three short (3-4 pages) profiles on Nigeria: "An Introduction to Nigeria"; "Nigerian History"; "The Road to Independence." These

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* Plato, *The Meno* (84A-B)

materials took the place of a text and provided the students, along with their maps and discussion, with the basic background information on the country. By Wednesday most students could easily identify the main tribal and religious groups, the main political parties, and were aware of some of the tensions within Nigeria. Thus the stage was set for our most important class: A Nigerian constitutional conference on Thursday.

The goal of our conference was to write a constitution for Nigeria based on our knowledge of its peoples and problems. The class divided into three groups, each representing one of Nigeria's principal regions—Eastern, Western and Northern. I led one group, Mr. Hersant another, and a junior student knowledgeable in African history the third. Each group had to make a decision on ten questions relating to a constitution; *e.g.* franchise, relation of regional to national governments, type of taxation, etc. The same sort of conference was also held in Mr. Hersant's second class in World history.

The results of this conference were both interesting and exciting. Most of the students were able to think in Nigerian terms; *i.e.* to role play successfully. I found that students who seldom spoke up in full class discussion had a lot to say in these smaller groups (8 or 9 students). Thus, in my group, representing the northern regions, we insisted that the capital of Lagos be a federal district rather than an integral part of the western region. After all, the Northerners reasoned, you cannot really trust the Yoruba tribe in the west. We wanted our capital, which was also the port of outlet for our goods, to be under federal control.

Interestingly enough, the three group leaders did notice one difference between the two classes who did this exercise. Class A did a better job of discussing the constitutional questions from a Nigerian point of view than did Class B. Yet class B was considered the better one academically, although both classes were rated by the school as "general." The difference seemed simply to be this: the somewhat less talented Class A more easily assumed the role of Nigerians than Class B. The latter group tended to answer the questions on the basis of abstract considerations of what was fair and just, while those in Class A more easily saw what would be most advantageous for their particular tribe or region. This discovery probably indicates that students of average intelligence, but with no particularly strong academic interest, do have a "natural" ability to role play; that, in this situation, they were able, assuming adequate terms. The result was that Class A came up with a constitution quite similar to the one Nigeria had at the time of independence in 1960.

The final day of my teaching was spent summing up the unit of material and discussing Nigeria today. I had a copy of a March 19 *New York Times* article on the present crisis in Nigeria reproduced so that each student had a copy. The fact that Nigeria was and still is on the verge of a break up and/or civil war made the topic of obvious current interest.

It is difficult to assess what was or was not accomplished in these two weeks. Certainly it is safe to say that no miracles were wrought. But there are two basic questions which I shall attempt to answer: How much did the students learn about Africa? How much interest in African history and contemporary affairs did the students develop?

To answer the first question I returned to Class A ten days after completing the unit and administered another questionnaire: "What do you remember about Africa?" Some of the questions were the same as on the original questionnaire and others were based on material covered during the two weeks. The results showed very simply that most students had learned something about Africa, but not a great deal. Some of the facts, for example, about Nigeria which had been known by nearly all the students ten days before had already been forgotten or were now hazy. Yet, on the whole, the average student knew a bit more about Africa—its size, diversity, countries, current problems—than he or she did prior to the study.

The second question—on student interest—is more difficult to answer, but, in my opinion, is the more crucial question. Many of the students did show interest in our study while it was going on. But it is not at all certain that they retained this interest. Few of them apparently read a newspaper regularly or keep up in any way with current events. Hence they probably were not reading about African news, including news on Nigeria, which might have kept their interest alive. In other words, I cannot really answer the second question. I would only hazard this generalization: the students may have gotten enough of a "feel" for African problems to realize the importance of historical knowledge and understanding for an understanding of Africa today.

> A number of professors indicate that merely talking to the class was not enough. They argue for many and varied activities. To know one's subject and to be interested in the students is not enough. Discipline problems can emerge.

The attention span of many of the students was very limited. It soon became apparent to me that the old dictum that a well prepared teacher presenting an organized unit and evidencing a personal interest in the material will have no discipline problems is not necessarily so. One of the real problems I experienced was what to do when I was listening to comments by students on one side of the room and minor skirmishes developed on the opposite side. I found that moving toward the offenders but keeping my attention on the students who were involved in the discussion tended to restore order. Perhaps the teacher in this situation has to learn to tolerate some restlessness, but more importantly this experience clearly indicated the need for varying activities and introducing relevant materials such as maps, pictures, individual proj-

ects, film strips, and the like. Talking with a group such as this for a sustained period of time simply is not enough.

After describing his attempts at teaching an unknown language, Swahili, to a group of slow learners in a New Brunswick, Maine junior high school,with limited success, one professor calls for more emphasis on the "non-intellectual" preparation of teachers of English.

One final introductory note: My attempts to bring the subject matter closer to the students' own lives were only marginally successful. I tried such techniques as eliciting sentences for analysis from non-standard English or French speech and from student reading. We did get a few good examples of ellipsis in conversational English after examining some sentences from Hemingway which used both "damn" and "bitch." (The heavens did not fall nor, to my knowledge, did the school office receive a flurry of angry parental phone calls, but clearly the use of such examples is not to be recommended as routine practice to fledgling teachers.) Such immediately present examples did usually actively engage those members of the class who presented the examples, including those who had not responded to previous discussion. For the boys, for instance, a particularly good day was the day we attempted to write a generative grammar for the scoring of a baseball game. In retrospect it now strikes me that small group instruction might have been more successful than the whole class instruction actually used. French Canadian students sitting at a French Canadian table might have felt free to produce examples in French that they hesitated to advance before the group as a whole.

The teaching hypothesis for my professor-in-the-classroom unit was that given to the students' prior unsatisfactory mastery of English grammar and the varied student population, the novelty of looking at an entirely unknown language might be a meaningful way of reapproaching the structure of English. The language used was Swahili. The examples of Swahili given were genuine but edited to exclude marginally important forms likely to cause confusion. The students were first given such word pairings as:

atanipenda	he will like us
atakupenda	he will like you

and asked which Swahili morpheme they thought associated with us and which with you. (The learning of technical vocabulary, *e.g.* morpheme, was not a teaching objective but where such terminology was useful it was not avoided. perhaps unwisely so at the beginning.) Further examples such as:

utampenda	you will like him
unamsumbua	you are annoying him

led to asking the students to suggest the likely order of morphemes in a Swahili verb.

This confrontation of the student with a language for which his store of stack responses was inapplicable was continued with such forms as:

ubao—plank	mbao—planks
mtoto—child	watoto—children

Further sophistication was demanded in seeing that:

mboga—vegetable	mboga—vegetables
ndoto—dream	ndoto—dreams
nggao—shield	nggao—shields

belong to the same class of nouns. The analogous English forms were then discussed. "Why is the negative morpheme pronounced *im*possible but *in*determinate?" Finally whole sentences were explored and an attempt made to write portions of a generative, transformational grammar of simple Swahili sentences. At the beginning of the fourth week the students were provided with brief glossaries of Swahili-English and English-Swahili. Attempts at writing Swahili proved to the students that there is more to knowing a language than knowing the lexicon.

As a unit project, Swahili had many strengths which strike me as sufficiently compelling to cause me to plan to work it up in further detail for possible use in the schools. Some testing of certain of this material elsewhere has suggested that it works well with advanced and highly motivated sections of high school and even grade school English. But as a unit for reaching children of the disadvantaged groups represented in the mixed environment of English 8-C, it was frankly disappointing. A language somewhat less different from English than Swahili might have been more acceptable to these students. Parenthetically I can report that last summer I had the opportunity to teach a little urban-Negro English to a group of disadvantaged French-Canadian bilingual students from the St. John's Valley in northern Maine who were in residence at Bowdoin College in an Upward Bound program. To the degree that I had material available, "Urban Negro Speech" was a very successful unit. We aren't the only ones who talk English differently.

Of more immediate application to the preparation of teachers of the disadvantaged is a program for the non-intellectual preparation of the classroom teacher of English. I would in some way duplicate the disadvantaged student's feeling of "nothing makes any sense." The learning I would hope to promote would be visceral rather than conceptual. Recent experimentation by the Peace Corps in training teachers of English-as-second-language by immersing the student no matter what his eventual target language in the week long study of a totally foreign language—say Arabic—would be my model. For the training of teachers for the disadvantaged a program of a similar nature using a non-standard English dialect might be particularly effective. I can see great value in an intensive five-day, live-in seminar in which prospective teachers of the disadvantaged were penalized for every departure from urban Negro or down-East Maine speech.

I would not expect to add much to a prospective teacher's command of linguistic method thereby—nor am I suggesting this week in depth as a substitute for such intellectual competence—but it would, I hope, give him insight into those of this students whose sense of futility with English is so great that they need more than competent classroom teaching and good materials. This, in any case, is the course that I wished I had had before teaching English 8-C this spring.

Implications for Teacher Education

The thirteen academic professors were modest in their claims as to their success or lasting effects in the public school classrooms, and they were reticent to draw up any hard and fast recommendations for teacher education. Nevertheless it may be profitable to consider their reflections on these experiences in the elementary and secondary school classrooms.

What conclusions, then, can I draw from this experience? I am not so presumptuous as to believe that I can make recommendations concerning the preparation of teachers for *disadvantaged* classes on the basis of so brief an exposure to the problem. Too, I am very much aware that the novelty of a visitor can seemingly—for a short time at least—lead to an intensification of interest; the regular teacher, on the other hand, must accomplish by competence what the visitor can sometimes accomplish by glitter. Although I cannot make recommendations, I can offer some observations.

Subject matter preparation is vitally important. I am aware that I belabor the obvious when I say so, but I must repeat it. The teacher must have an appreciation for as well as an understanding of his subject. The pupils in this or any other classroom are quick to detect a flagging interest or a flagging appreciation on the part of the teacher. I do not mean to imply that the teacher should like all of the literature he teaches in the same way or, indeed, that he should like all of the literature he teaches. After all, his function is to teach discrimination as well as appreciation. Yet he must be thoroughly grounded in his subject before he can discriminate or appreciate. And with thorough grounding, it is extremely easy to broaden horizons. If the class interest seems to wander, it is quite simple to get the pupils back to the task at hand by discussing seemingly peripheral but actually germane matters. For example, during the teaching of *Julius Caesar*, I found myself discussing such topics as hierarchy and order, the art of the pun and paronomasia, and matters of prosody. The pupils join in such discussions with eagerness because, perhaps, they feel they have sidetracked you at the time that you are, oh so cleverly, insidiously boring—and that is *not* a pun—from within.

Certainly prospective teachers should be taught by precept and example how to encourage classroom participation, how to make the classroom a stimulating and exciting place to be, and how to provide all of the pupils with a sense of identity. Perhaps I may be excused if I suggest that anyone genuinely interested in becoming a teacher would know most of these things instinctively.

There is a definite need for better texts and for better audio and visual aids. With the paper-back revolution, it seems ridiculous to teach a Shakespearean play, for example, from a massive and formidable anthology. Records are available, too, of poets reading from their own and other poets' works; the Shakespeare Recording Society has recorded over twenty of Shakespeare's plays, and pupils respond well to them. There are other good recordings of actors performing other plays. Communities would be fortunate if they could obtain the services of a resident repertory company so that the pupils could have the opportunity to seeing live theater. It would be helpful if a close collaboration between school departments and repertory theaters could be obtained in the selection of plays but, judging from local experience, this may be asking too much.

In a modest manner our Brown professor reiterates the competency role that the scholar-teacher from the college was expected to play in this project. Can the learned professor become a hero model to the student? Can this role be played out by the teacher in the high school? Surely, if students, advantaged or disadvantaged, can identify with the teacher-scholar, the task of leading the pupils to the rational world of books can become that much easier.

My natural New England diffidence and reticence has caused me to offer this observation as one of the last, but in the interests of truth I must report it. This, too, will probably come as no surprise to people with experience in the secondary schools, but it seems that I became something of a status symbol. The class taught by "the college professor" was looked upon with envy. The members of the tenth-grade class began, I am told. to consider themselves fortunate. I noticed—this I didn't have to be told—that when I would see members of the class in the corridors or on the sidewalks, they would go out of their way to speak to me. I, needless to say, was grateful. Too, the twelfth graders who had been exposed to my less-than-tender ministrations reacted in much the same way. They too were privileged. Perhaps this is what I meant when I spoke earlier about the advantaged of being a visitor, a novelty.

The Harvard linguist who spent three months in the Boston schools comments on his lack of familiarity with the American public school system. He reiterates his concern for the need for education about language within the entire teaching profession. His reflections on theory and practice also merit close study.

As a consequence of this experiment and experience what have I learnt? What is it that I will never do again, or will be burning to do in the years ahead as I go before the many groups of Harvard MATs to follow this year's? What new wisdom and insight do I now possess? What of vital importance can I now say to the educators of the deprived?

Let me try to answer these questions in the context of my own background and concerns. For I am already deeply involved in American education: prior to my coming to Harvard and while a linguist at the University of Oregon, I developed the language part of a secondary school English curriculum and now for the last two years I have taught a large part of the curriculum and methods course for Harvard MATs (English), most of whom go on to teach at fairly privileged levels, though a significant and growing subset of them is interested in the education of the deprived. And I speak knowingly and idealistically about English education to anyone, to any NDEA Institute, to any school system, that will listen. Yet I tremble to reveal that until these twelve weeks at the Lewis school, I had never been in a real American secondary school for longer than two or three hours at a time and then on as few occasions as possible: five visits, I believe, is the full count. On two of these visits I was a smashing teaching hit: once for a full fifty minute period; another time for a half a period. Indeed, my contact with secondary schools in other countries (Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Nigeria) has been far more extensive than my contact with the American secondary school.

Thus what I present my prospective teachers with and the various audiences of already teachers that seek me out is pretty much based in reading, conversation, and intuition and not at all informed by a rich relationship with the American school—not at all informed by it, but then not fettered by it. For in retrospect, I've been quite fortunate. I've had some experiences and a measure of time in which to construct a rich hypothsis of what a language class is all about, and finally, now, a chance to try the whole thing out briefly, a chance to modify my hypothesis. Reality, come at with nothing much settled, appears more bizarre and more frightening than it can ever really be. A hypothesis about reality constrains modification within sane limits.

So I have learnt that in many things, I am pretty much right: there is among the deprived a rich language and grammar under poor control because of a paucity of well understood language games (*games* in the sense of Wittgenstein), because of a set against certain language roles. It is hard work, for example, to make a Socratic dialog go amongst those for whom a cycling question and answer movement towards truth is culturally unsatisfactory. And indeed in a culture where only some language roles (or none) are the stuff of mobility and action, it is hard to see how to counteract so clearly an environment-learned set except by extensive adult language education, *i.e.*, by pre-natal care of more than just the body. Still it is even harder to imagine any success in this direction unless control over language really does measure out to be or follow from control over one's environment and destiny.

Education is basically language development. Ways of talking learnt within the family (see the work of Basil Bernstein in this connection) become adapted to talking about matters outside the family. The full range of ways of talking is not learnt in a socially-deprived environment and thus is not available for use in many aspects of life including the schools as now established. Nor are the school teachers of the deprived adapted to the situation they must face. The reticence, the non-verbalness of students who talk so readily among themselves in and out of class is partially a result of the students' having no sense of how to play the language games required of them. These children are not willfully silent. Yet their teachers (of any subject) are willfully ignorant of language and its relationship with culture and certainly with the subculture with which they must deal. My experience in the Lewis school clearly supports my demand for education about language for the entire teaching profession. It is not that this knowledge about language offers direct procedures for dealing with language problems, but it does lead one to understand what the problems are not and it does feed the intuitions of the really concerned teacher.

Yet, I am frankly skeptical of any large scale success in enlarging the range of ways of talking within the four-wall school and the powerless environment. Language education allows the teacher to see more clearly. Whether he can then act more directly is not at all apparent. Indeed whether the school is the place in which the learning of language games can take place is in serious doubt.

I've been wrong in believing that teachers can be educated in separate theory and practice compartments, that my compartment is the theory and that the wide world after me and after the university is the practice. For there is very little in the lives of most educated types to make it possible for them to take up a place—even a practice place—in a school, deprived or privileged. Much can be learned from observing the halls, the classrooms, the students, the teachers: if education is talk and the classrooms silence that talk, something is seriously wrong. We will see what is wrong by our observing and our talking. A methods course shouldn't be gimmicks—any teacher knows that the apt way of clarifying comes suddenly; the notion *ambiguity* is caught in the Gestalt cube that sometimes recedes into the distance and some-

times comes at you out of the distance. The methods course should not be techniques but approach (theory) and method (procedures for carrying out the theory).*

Many of the methods can be seen: how to crush a child or how not to; why the talk ends and why the silence begins. Partially it is this language roles problem, but partially it is the deadness that is the public school with its devotion to elitist notions of education and gentility; and nowhere is this more apparent than in the English classroom where good grammar and good *literatyoor* still hold sway.

Working among the deprived allows one to think back and move back to a study of language that ties up honestly with the world of language, to a study of literature that relates importantly to the experience of the beholder. The deprived schools are the farthest and still the safest from our adult world. Let's begin to think freely and honestly there and then perhaps we can begin later the bigger job of saving the suburbs from their rush towards graduate school moribundity.

A professor from Smith comments on the ingredients that go in to making an effective teacher preparation program, noting that there are many forces outside of school that influence learning. A strong case is presented for the practicum experience as the core of the teacher preparation program.

The problems of the teacher involved with these students may appear to be quite different from those of teachers in other types of population centers, but there are many common problem areas that might be made easier with an improved pre- and in-service teacher education program. We must bear in mind, however, that no matter how successful we might be in improving teacher education there are many more variables outside the classroom which bear on the academic success of the youngsters in the school.

An individual is not a teacher unless he possesses three basic qualities; one or two won't do. They are first, a real command of the subject matter to be taught; second, a real love for the age group with which one will be intimately involved for five days a week for forty weeks; and third, an ability to communicate the subject matter to students of varying ability levels. Simply feeling the beauty of the Elizabethan sonnet is not enough; this alone will not turn on the teenager in Watts who last night was waving a knife screaming, "Burn, whitey, burn!"

The improvement of teacher education is the responsibility of both the professor of subject matter and the professor of education on the college campus as well as of the schools in which the new teachers will ply their trade. The same groups also share the responsibility of initiating curriculum reforms; but that is a topic for another time.

It is impossible to divorce subject matter content from teaching methods. It is attempted at many institutions for many different reasons, not the least of which has been the unwillingness of the subject matter professor to have any part of training his students to be teachers. Nobody trained him in any element of pedagogy and look at him today. Indeed, let us look! The majority still relies on the lecture three times a week to transfer notes from the lectern to the student's notebooks. That's the way it was done in the medieval university so why not today.

Equally at fault is the professor of education who refuses to relinquish any part of teacher training to anyone outside the establishment. General methods courses are guarded zealously lest the education professor "lose control." Both groups are in a way responsible for the other's misguided attitude. The real loser is the public school youngster who is the ultimate beneficiary of these jurisdictional disputes. The public school systems, who stand to gain most from better trained teachers, are not beyond reproach either. At times they refuse to provide the training ground for practice teachers, and at other times they insist that the new teachers teach only the way the old teacher taught, thereby cutting off any possibility of creativity, innovation, and possible long run improvement.

For a subject area to be distinct from the others it must have a unique method of inquiry. The method of the historian is different from the method of the physicist. Teaching a class American history is quite a different thing from teaching a class quantum physics. To have a professor of education attempt to impart the method of all disciplines taught at the secondary level in a general methods of teaching class is ludicrous. For the professor of history or the professor of physics to abdicate this responsibility to the professor of education is equal folly. Only when the baseless prejudices and fears of our college faculties are finally put to rest will there be any real improvement in teacher education generally.

Even the enlightened professor of American history who is aware of and interested in good teaching might be leery of involving himself in the training of secondary school teachers because of lack of personal experience on that level. That is an easy one to solve: simply get him into a secondary school classroom a few times. Have him listen to these students who are working in the schools and, perhaps, together they can attempt to solve some of the problems.

When he does go into the school it is the progressive school administrator who will make good use of him. The most logical value to be gained from professorial involvement in the schools would be in the areas of curriculum improvement and in-service training. Too many public school administrators feel that to change things is to admit that everything has not been perfect up to now.

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* Anthony, Edward. "Approach, method, and technique." *English Language Teaching* 17:63-67; 1963.

The old town-gown friction can also come back to haunt such efforts in college-school cooperation. It is the unusual and refreshing principal or superintendent who is willing to try something new, who is willing to make a mistake. What a wonderful opportunity it would be for a school district to have college professors with bright, interested, and involved undergraduates working with teachers and administrators to improve the education of their students.

The most vital element of any program of teacher training is the actual involvement in the classroom: the practice teaching. The practice teacher should be encouraged by both the college and the school to spend a good deal of time in the classroom, observing and teaching. Attempts should be made in scheduling to allow the neophyte to have sustained periods with one group of students, experience with various courses within the discipline, and the chance to work with varying ability levels.

This brings us for the moment to the question of grouping. American educators have long been concerned with the academic development of the very able students. Over the years, as the range of ability among high school youth widened, a controversy has developed concerning the efficacy of homogeneous grouping as opposed to heterogeneous grouping. Even among the proponents of homogeneous classes there was still a widespread conviction that the social studies should remain heterogeneous so that the subject area could continue its socializing influence, believed necessary for the maintenance of our democratic ideals and institutions.

In conclusion let us look at the secondary school teacher preparation program at Smith College and how it is evolving as a result of several projects including the NESDEC-NEBHE. Students preparing to teach in secondary schools will major in the department of the discipline they are preparing to teach. They will take what amounts to a minor in the department of education and child study in order to complete their professional preparation and to be eligible for teacher certification in the state of their choice. Special methods courses (the teaching of history, the teaching of physics) will be taught in all subject areas by faculty trained in the appropriate discipline. The only secondary school teaching areas without such a special methods course in 1967-68 are expected to be mathematics and chemistry. It is also expected that in 1967-68 Smith professors of history, English, art, music, sociology, government, philosophy, German, economics, and physics will do some teaching at Northampton high school. In addition, these professors will help Smith College seniors prepare their classroom material for practice teaching.

One last word about a department of education at a liberal arts college. At Smith we think it to be quite appropriate, since about twenty per cent of this year's graduating class will be going into public and private school teaching. The department is also responsible for a preschool through grade nine campus school which serves as a laboratory, primarily for elementary school teacher training. Education is a parasitic discipline much like medicine. As medicine draws upon biology, chemistry, physiology, and the likes, so does education draw upon the disciplines of history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Each course within an education department should be based upon one of these disciplined methods of inquiry. If it is, then the course stands very well within the liberal arts curriculum.

> The following recommendations have been drawn up for secondary school teachers-to-be who are being prepared to take their place in the social studies classrooms.

At this point, let me make some suggestions, *vis-a-vis* the preparation of teachers of the disadvantaged, especially for those planning to teach in the area of social studies at the secondary level. A prerequisite for any success, it seems to me, is to prepare teachers temperamentally to measure the success of a class in terms of the learning that students do, apart from what the teacher himself does. Prospective teachers need to engage in the same kind of learning that our Upward Bound students, in their best moments, were engaged in. It is those teachers who, having themselves known, during their student days, some of the excitement and rigors of scholarly inquiry, will be more successful in awakening the intellectual life of their students. This seems rather obvious, but it may well call for drastic reform (I won't say revolution) in the teaching strategies employed in our history departments. A witty and sophisticated lecture may be enjoyable and even worthwhile, but it provides no important model for the future teacher. Its focus is really the teacher; it assumes the engagement of the student. Such engagement is no less rare among college students than among disadvantaged secondary school youngsters. What I am driving at is that the teacher, as student, must study history as an active inquirer himself, not as the receptacle of the glamorous conclusions of others. Moreover, such an emphasis would allow for the much needed analysis of classroom interaction. Regular student evaluations of the strategies employed in the classroom in which they have been enrolled, would be a fruitful component of a teacher-training program.

In the area of historical content itself, it would be useful for prospective teachers to be offered courses which show boldness and imagination, which break the traditional historiographical lines. For example, would not a course of "South Africa and the American South" be provocative, not only for the larger perspective it offers, but also in inducing students to be creative in their own planning? Isn't there too much thinking in rigid categories and over concern with panoramic coverage?

Of course, these comments are applicable to all prospective teachers, not solely those whose work will be primarily with disadvantaged students. Actually, this is one of the real contributions of the disadvantaged to educa-

tion. They force us to rethink our objectives and strategies for all students.

On the other hand, there are aspects of a teacher-training program which might well be indispensable only for those preparing to work with disadvantaged youth. For these latter, a program that provides rich personal contacts with disadvantaged youngsters, on a one-to-one basis, can be of inestimable value. Sensitivity to a life style that is likely to be quite different from one's own would strike this observer as a *sine qua non* for teachers who hope to be successful. At its best, such contact, should include non-academic involvement as well as more formal arrangements, such as tutoring.

This field work experience is best combined, I would argue, with theoretical course-work dealing with sociological and psychological studies of educationally disadvantaged groups. Practical experience needs the theoretical framework, the larger perspective; otherwise, it is likely to result in inadequate or misinformed conclusions. On the other side, theory without concurrent experience is likely to be sterile and to lead to overgeneralizing—with serious repercussions.

One other aspect of the teacher-training program which is crucial, is the curriculum and methods course. Of all courses, this one can least afford to be didactic in tone. When the question, "What should be the goals of a course in history?" is raised, pat answers are the last thing in the world that are called for. Genuine and continuous wrestling with this question in the context of an examination of specific units drawn up, in part, by the students themselves is what is needed. The course ought to be arranged so that after six weeks or so, students might teach a unit in tandem with an experienced teacher in the schools. Videotapes of some of these class sessions could then be analyzed in the methods course, which would reconvene for the remainder of the semester. The tapes would provide excellent material not only for discussion of objectives, but also for the evaluation of alternative teaching strategies. Can one imagine a more fruitful base for meaningful discussion than two tapes of ostensibly, the same historical content structured differently by the teachers involved?

A course organized along these lines would provide not only for enough contact with the classroom to be relevant, but also for enough distance to allow for reflection. The same principle should pervade all aspects of a program designed to prepare teachers to work effectively with disadvantaged students.

> A Bates College professor who has faced a class of slow-learning, deprived students raises a number of issues for those concerned with the preparation of teachers, particularly those who will face similar classes. He argues for closer contact between the professors of history and the teachers of history in the public schools.

This leads to some serious philosophical problems involved with teaching under-achievers. A new teacher who comes out of Bates College is primarily a subject matter teacher who has been trained by professors who expect him to have some knowledge and pride in his skills and discipline as an historian or chemist. Imagine what this new teacher must feel in dealing with a class such as this one! This particular class was nothing more than a reading course centered around historical topics. It required the teacher to jettison much of what he had been taught to value in his subject-oriented approach. The students' inability to retain more than the merest muttering of data, their tendency to corrupt what they do remember, the need to simplify one's vocabulary and reduce content to substance, all aroused in me a frustrated sense of what's the use?

The question resolves itself: How can colleges make this type of teaching meaningful to the teacher himself, and thus to the slow learner? Can the solution be found in the content of the discipline? Assuming that the content is taught in a meaningful fashion in the first place, I fail to see how the college history professor in his regular courses can specifically aid the teacher of slow learners. History courses are not only geared to school teachers—let alone school teachers of slow learners; many majors are preparing for careers in law, business, the ministry, and especially for graduate school. Somehow, the professor must cater to all these needs; he usually does so by stressing the discipline and skills of the historian.

Therefore, the method of presentation remains as the area in which the college can help prepare the teacher of slow learners. Two approaches are possible: (a.) to produce an educational specialist professionally trained to deal with slow learners in all fields; and (b.) to produce a subject matter teacher who has majored in a particular field (history) but who has been introduced to the problems of the slow learner as part of his methodological preparation.

The first proposal could be realized most effectively through a Master of Arts in Teaching program similar to the impressive Antioch-Putney system under the direction of Dr. Roy Fairfield. This specializes in teachers for poverty areas and includes a teacher-intern program whereby students teach a semester, under close supervision, in a blighted area. Upon graduation, new teachers are well acquainted with the professional problems related to poverty. With the current emphasis on preventing and reviewing high school dropouts, a similar program could be justified for the slow learner alone. But practical problems arise in that not all school systems are sufficiently enlightened as to single out slow learners into special sections for particular attention, and even where this does occur, there might be too few such sections to warrant the attention and cost of specialists.

Perhaps the second alternative is more practical. The undergraduate preparing for a teaching career could be introduced to the problems of the slow learner along with

the rest of his education courses. Each student-teacher should at least be able to listen to a teacher who actively deals with slow learners and to observe him in action. Hypothetically, I would suggest a week's work in a methods course be devoted to the problem of slow learners. I would suggest an hour's lecture by a school teacher on his own experience, problems and approaches with slow learners. In addition, it would not only be helpful, but extremely valuable, if all teachers could pick up fundamentals of remedial reading instruction. The slow learner classes are as much reading instruction as instruction in a given subject area, and the teacher should be acquainted with both.

These suggestions would by no means produce a specialist in the education of the slow learner, but they would help prepare a teacher for the experience should he be assigned such in the course of his normal duties. A teacher thus trained would be able to make his subject matter more meaningful to slow learners, and thereby avoid the sense of frustration he might experience otherwise.

One final observation seems warranted. If college teaching is going to bear much relevance to the schools, there must be an ever-increasing contact between professors of subject matter and methodology and their high school counterparts, not only for those coping with the problems of the slow learner, but in all areas. The project of which this report is a part is a manifestation of this need; the above recommendations look in this direction too. Happily, historians have been increasingly active in meeting their obligations. In the past decade there have been numerous contacts between colleges and the schools: several institutions have sponsored one day conferences for social science teachers; the American Historical Association maintains a very active Service Center for Teachers of History; and a large number of historians have participated in the NDEA supported summer institutes for high school teachers with eighty planned for the coming summer. Several outstanding historians have given their time to developing fresh approaches to teaching history in schools: Elting Morrison, Edmund S. Morgan, Douglas Adair have contributed to the work of Educational Services, Incorporated. Charles G. Sellers, Jr., and Alan Brownsword have cooperated with the California Social Sciences Study Committee. Sellers also headed a committee set up by the Organization of American Historians to study history in the schools.

This report sparked a joint effort by the Organization of American Historians, the National Council for the Social Studies, and the American Historical Association to maintain a clearing house and coordinating center for the many organizational and individual activities now planned in this field. The MAT program itself is a further example of how an entire history department can become involved in training future school teachers. All this is not to say that more cannot be done, but it does indicate that college professors and schools teachers are becoming conscious of the need for continuing contact.

A professor from Trinity College described three basic qualities that must be developed in a teacher education program. He also raises five points for consideration in answer at the question: "Whither teacher education?"

I found the task of teaching students on this level of age and ability a challenging and exhausting one. The greatest problem is basic lack of interest in the subject matter on the part of the students. Thus the teacher must seek to demonstrate that history is a valuable, interesting, and imporant subject. To do this a teacher needs three basic qualities: a thorough knowledge of and enthusiasm for the subject matter; an imaginative and creative approach to history; a willingness to be flexible in classroom presentation. Let me comment briefly on each of these areas.

First, the teacher must be well versed in his subject and have a basic intellectual commitment to it. My brief experience in high school teaching has forever destroyed for me the notion that the high school teacher can somehow get along with less enthusiasm and knowledge about his subject than the college teacher. If anything, he may need more if he truly desires to awaken the interest of uncommitted students.

Second, he must show some imagination and creativity in dealing with the subject. Can he, for example, depart from a text and seek new ways to look at an old subject? In history, can he show the students what history means in their terms? Such a point is not always clear when one simple plods through history in a chronological, narrative fashion.

Third, he must be willing to take a flexible approach to the subject matter, a point closely allied to imagination and creativity. The good teacher must think on his feet every moment of the time. He must be able to respond to the questions and interests students do have even if he had not anticipated them. In other words, if the content is important, so is the method or manner of presentation. Here variety and flexibility are most helpful.

With these thoughts about teacher skills and attitudes in mind, I would offer five general points on teacher training for purposes of discussion.

1. The battle between content and method needs to be resolved in favor of the teacher. Many teachers express the opinion that most method courses have proved to be of little value once they began teaching. This attitude has, in some cases, brought a reaction in favor of content courses which in my field would mean more graduate level courses in history itself. But is this adequate? In many cases, no. To have several courses in fairly special areas of history may indeed help the future teacher better understand history as a discipline, and, of course, increase his knowledge of particular areas. But his main job will probably be teaching fairly broad courses—world history, not eighteenth century diplomacy; or a survey of American

history, not politics in the age of Jackson. Thus what the future teacher needs most are graduate level survey courses—courses designed specifically for future high school teachers. Emphasis would be placed on gaining a thorough knowledge of the content, but with constant emphasis also on the methods and techniques of teaching the particular subject on the high school level. The general point is this: the war between content and method must come to a halt with some honest recognition that both approaches, isolated from one another, are not doing the job of educating future high school teachers.

2. The future teacher needs to know and observe the experienced and superior high school teacher in action. I found the aid of such teachers of the highest value in preparing for my own brief foray into Weaver high school. If I were contemplating a career in high school teaching, one of my first desires would be to gain all that I could from the wisdom and experience of those already in the field.

3. Those interested in or considering teaching the disadvantaged need to have their practice teaching experience in an appropriate high school. No doubt it is normally easier to place the practice teacher or teacher intern in suburban schools where most of the students are looking forward to a college education. But in order to encourage future teachers to consider urban schools and to give them some exposure to the special problems and opportunities in such schools, why not place them in that kind of school during the period of teacher training?

4. Teacher training and education should not cease once the future teacher has graduated. The school systems must realize the crucial importance of the new teacher's first year or two of teaching. I take it that one problem today is that young teachers may easily become frustrated and lonely in schools with disadvantaged pupils, and thus begin to look for the greener pastures of suburbia. But what are the urban schools doing to hold the interest and enthusiasm of the young teacher? An orientation program of a few days is not enough. The new teacher needs and should reasonably expect a great deal of help in the first year. He needs to know the specific problems of the particular school and the particular students he will be teaching. He should not simply be released into the classroom to sink or swim. He needs all the support and guidance he can get from the administration and experienced faculty members.

5. Finally what of the continuing education and intellectual growth of the high school teacher once his period of formal training is over? Many school systems keep a teacher so busy that he has little time for reading, reflection, and intellectual refreshment. How can he keep fresh when the end of each day leaves him exhausted? He must find the energy to correct papers, prepare the next day's classes and then appear bright and eager the following morning. College teachers fortunately gain much from contact with their colleagues, membership in professional organizations, and a periodic sabbatical semester or year. But what is done for the high school teacher in this regard? I suspect very little is done for him. After all, the high school teacher spends most of his time with adolescents. If he is not to take on adolescent characteristics and attitudes himself, he needs and ought reasonably to expect opportunities for adult contacts directly relating to his intellectual and educational needs.

I have suggested only five areas for discussion about teacher training. No doubt there are many more. But I offer these on the basis of my limited teaching experience made possible by this project, and from many informal discussions with high school teachers, some of whom I meet in my graduate classes at Trinity College. And I offer them in the hope that the study of history is an important subject to any member of society, be he rich and sophisticated, or poor and disadvantaged. The great task, it seems to me, is discovering the best way to present this subject to our students, along with a hard look at how we prepare those who will make the presentation. If we are not willing to do that then perhaps we have no business requiring students to take history courses in the first place.

After teaching in the elementary school, one professor makes some specific suggestions concerning the reorganization of the elementary school program calling for greater specialization of teachers in subject matter areas.

I have no illusions that my time with these students had lasting value for them. But I am just as certain that my experinece with them demonstrated beyond argument that all of these students, even the most disruptive and uninterested ones, can be quickened into participation by the right approach. Whether this would hold true for older students is perhaps far more doubtful. During our days of play-acting there was not a single student who was not eager to volunteer for a role, and the kind of openness and cooperation that is generated in moments like this can carry over into other, more traditional kinds of teaching.

The further point that needs to be made is that such things are unlikely to happen in overcrowded classrooms, with overworked and weary teachers. I don't believe my success with the class—and despite some poor moments, it was a success—is a special tribute to me, though I do believe I am an energetic and exciting teacher. The simple fact is that for two weeks I spent virtually all of my time preparing for those sessions with the students; no regular teacher—burdened with all the traditional obligations to teach a variety of subjects and to handle mountains of trivial administrative detail—no regular teacher could conceivably find the time to do what I was free to do for a very brief period. Revolutionary changes have to take place in our schools if any real and sustained creative teaching is going to be done in them.

One partial solution might be to use in the lower grades, say, from second or third grade on a system like the one

used today in high schools in which teachers specialize in individual subjects. In grade schools one might want the students to stay fixed in their rooms and the teachers to shift from room to room, but the principle, or some modification of it, seems to me to promise a great deal. Under some such plan it might become possible for teachers to try out new ideas because they would be able to devote themselves entirely to a single subject, and because the enormous preparation which is required for special projects would at least be used for all of the teacher's work and not just for a small part of it. A plan like this would seem to me to be desirable in all schools, but particularly so in schools with disadvantaged populations.

A final argument for this kind of specialization has to do with its effect on the students. During my time in the classroom I became quickly aware of the fact that I was starting out with one great advantage and one serious disadvantage. The advantage was that I was strange to the students, and they were obviously more willing than usual, out of curiosity if nothing else, to give me their attention. But this unfamiliarity also worked against me because the students never really developed any sense of my authority as a teacher. Especially in the final days of my project, they were difficult to control because they saw our work as a lark, a kind of reprieve from their normal and serious routine. It seems possible to me that under a system in which students saw three or four regular teachers each day—and perhaps not always in the same order—some of the atmosphere of excitement from which I benefited might be maintained through the whole year, yet without compromising the authority which is essential to sustained teaching.

After working with a small, hard core group of deprived pupils, a Dartmouth professor sums up some of his concerns regarding the talkative nature of the boys and the need for redefining the purposes of education. He stresses the need for letting prospective teachers see it "like it is" in their preparation for work in the classroom.

It is clear from having participated in this project that my conclusions concerning it and the larger question of its relevance to teacher preparation are mixed. In any conclusions I see fundamental questions about the purposes of the school and the role and function of the teacher. As a way to circumvent this problem I wish to state that these conclusions should not in their raw form be considered recommendations.

In my descriptions of the class sessions the fact that the boys talked continually—and that this was one reason it took us so long to originate the petition for a smoking room—is not evident. Any training which aims to work with similar students should calculate how best to take advantage of the energy and eagerness the students have for talk, without having it rule the class and without inhibiting it through strict rules of silence. This leads directly to the problem of deciding what they should talk about (subject matter).

My experience with the group went halfway in trying out a proposed solution. We talked about them (the students) and their interests as those interests related to the school. The second part of the experiment, which was not completed, would be to attempt to have them talk about the historically considered context of what other students in other periods of time might talk about in the terms then current. This proposition is of course Deweyan and derivative: that the students' present interest are useful for the leverage they afford and not in any accomplishment they represent. I support that in the long run I would not throw over the use of history as an organizing principle of instruction (discard Franklin, Jefferson, Mann and Dewey?); but at the start of any work with a group similar to mine I would subordinate it almost out of sight.

This is so because of the alienation between the students and the regular school program. If a teacher is going to pick up a disadvantaged group in its midcareer, then I see as first demands those of redefining the purpose of education for the student who doesn't buy it. This should be done separately from the regular class to which he has been assigned; for he is already isolated from the class and not an operating part of it. The social purposes of different type of grouping are not an initial factor; for, again from my experience, the priority for the student is a situation in which what he has to say counts. To my mind this personal reassurance takes precedence over social considerations; and, of course, he is in a reduced, less pressurized social situation anyway.

To carry out this conclusion a school would need more money, more space, and more teachers. Let me add that Mr. Severance's findings in the regular class operations during the experiment support the concept of dealing with the disadvantaged student in high school separately. At the same time that these students actively reject the academic class process, another group of students is actively accepting it and finding their reinforcement in "good" academic behavior. It follows, I believe, that the school and the teacher should accept the non-academic student and not ostracize him by making his situation socially and intellectually intolerable by not responding to his dilemma. It was utterly clear that my group knew precisely the disdain the school felt toward them; and, of course, I made matters worse by not being in a position to follow through with my approach.

For prospective teachers of the disadvantaged, then, some provisions should be made to know these realities, and the best way to do this is to have the disadvantaged students tell the trainees just how it is. What they will say will not be entirely true, of course, but it will be entirely real. The problem for the teacher of such students will be to unlearn the procedures, subject matter, and other assumptions related to "good" academic students and

substitute in his own thinking some strategies relative to the "bad" student. The first thing to go would be standards, because so far as the "bad" student is concerned, they aren't important.

My own thinking about how this could be done without a great upheaval in college programs, school programs, and the status quo, concerned the idea of having Dartmouth students prepare to teach-conduct the detention room at Hartford high school, not typically as a place of punishment but as a tutoring-counseling experiment. There is no question as to the value to the Dartmouth student in doing this kind of thing, and I suggest that it would put a positive construct on an institution abhorred by its members. I am not sure at this time whether one teacher could do both the regular classes and the new classes, although I would hope that the experiences of one would complement the other. I think "good" students ought not to be taken for granted, either.

On the basis of insufficient evidence from the trip to the computer center and the work with the tape recorder, I would conclude that the whole question of technological applications in teaching should be investigated by the prospective teacher. I have not, however, had a chance to formulate their specific applications.

> Following on his own experience in a junior high school, one professor concerns himself with the need to include more than academic competence in achievement assessment. Like others he calls for periodical returns to "where the action is" in the preparation of future teachers.

My final comment about the students is that they were challenging and fascinating. When I started on this initial venture into the public schools, I had a rather romantic image of teaching youngsters of this age. Sara Teasdale in one of her poems sums it up in a line: "children's faces looking up, holding wonder like a cup." I saw such an expression many times during that week, but it was fleeting rather than sustained, and sometimes it was furtive rather than open. I think I now understand a little better the problems of teaching junior high school students. These youngsters are growing inside and outside, socially and intellectually, and at different rates. Surely one of the important challenges facing their teachers is to help them understand and accept themselves during this period of rapid development. Surely, also, one of the important challenges facing college teachers who are assisting in the preparation of future teachers is to help these young people achieve a sense of personal competence. Too often, it seems to me, the assessment of competence is based largely upon academic achievement which is but one important variable. To really understand the relative importance of other variables, college teachers should periodically return to "where the action is." For this brief opportunity I am grateful to the New England School Development Council and the New England Board of Higher Education.

NOTE: Excerpts from the professors' reports end here.

IV

Recapitulation

Thirteen prestigious professors in New England colleges and universities tried their hand and head at teaching deprived youngsters in the elementary and secondary classrooms. In this effort they revealed considerable "know-how" as well as appreciation for what it might take to improve the preparation of teachers.

All of the participating professors reported this to be a rewarding and exciting experience; all of them indicated that they would be glad to go another round, but with one misgiving: such an experience can interfere with one's college career development.

A number of the professors in the project indicated that their elementary or secondary school teaching experience might serve as a black mark against them in the promotional process and the reward system of the college. "If I had spent the same amount of time in giving an advanced seminar in my specialty, I would have been a step closer to earning my promotion," was the rueful comment of one of the professors. Another confessed that he was careful not to let any of his departmental colleagues know of his high school teaching adventure—or misadventure—for fear of reproof if not reprisal.

We need to ask the question: Why is the art of communicating the same subject matter at lower grade levels held in such low esteem? Surely the difficulty of the teaching-learning task mounts with the immaturity of the pupil. What does this imply for those concerned with the improvement of teacher education?

If, as many of our professors recommended, improved teacher education is to involve close collaboration of the academics, professional educators, and the local school teachers, it will be necessary to change or even to reverse the reward system on college campuses. The college professor who can communicate his subject matter at the elementary and secondary level as well as at the college level should be given an extra-meritorious rank. For it is through the strategic deployment of this kind of talent and interest in the preparation of future teachers at all grade levels that teacher education can be lifted out of its traditional shallows.

APPENDIX

NEBHE-NESDEC
Thirteen Professor Project
Roster of Participants

BATES COLLEGE
Lewiston, Maine

Professor:	James S. Leamon
Subject Area:	American History
Teacher:	Robert V. Conners
Principal:	Isadore Shapiro
School:	Lewiston High School
School System:	Lewiston, Maine
Superintendent:	J. Weldon Russell

BOWDOIN COLLEGE
Brunswick, Maine

Professor:	Reginald Hannaford
Subject Area:	English
Teacher:	Wayne Settle
Principal:	Betty Rasmussen
School:	Brunswick Junior High School
School System:	Brunswick, Maine
Superintendent:	Mario Tonan

BROWN UNIVERSITY
Providence, Rhode Island

Professor:	Elmer Blistein
Subject Area:	English
Teacher:	Mrs. Virginia A. Emmert
Principal:	Howard G. Lewis
School:	Hope High School
School System:	Provindence, Rhode Island
Superintendent:	Charles O'Connor, Jr.

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE
Hanover, New Hampshire

Professor:	Donald Campbell
Subject Area:	History
Teacher:	William Severance
Principal:	John Gates
School:	Hartford High School
School System:	Hartford, Vermont
Superintendent:	John Frietas

HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Professor:	Wayne A. O'Neil
Subject Area:	English
Teacher:	Miss Theresa Hamrock
Principal:	Frances X. Murphy
School:	Lewis Junior High School
School System:	Boston, Massachusetts
Superintendent:	William Cunningham (Associate)

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE
Middlebury, Vermont

Professor:	Betty K. Thurber
Subject Area:	Reading
Teacher:	Mrs. Margaret Dean
Principal:	Kenneth Seversen
School:	Middlebury Union High School
School System:	Middlebury, Vermont
Superintendent:	Ralph A. Eaton

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
Boston, Massachusetts

Professor:	E. Lawrence Durham
Subject Area:	Cultural Anthropology
Teacher:	William MacDonald
Principal:	William Webster
School:	Weeks Junior High School
School System:	Newton, Massachusetts
Superintendent:	Charles Brown

SMITH COLLEGE
Northampton, Massachusetts

Professor:	Lawrence A. Fink
Subject Area:	American History
Teacher:	Ledyard Southard
Principal:	John J. Feeney
School:	Northampton High School
School System:	Northampton, Massachusetts
Superintendent:	John M. Buteau

TRINITY COLLEGE
Hartford, Connecticut

Professor:	Borden W. Painter
Subject Area:	World History
Teacher:	Miss Mary C. MacDonnell, Supervising Teacher Darryl E. Hersant, Teacher Intern
Principal:	Ezra Melrose
School:	Weaver High School
School System:	Hartford, Connecticut
Superintendent:	Medill Bair

TUFTS UNIVERSITY
Medford, Massachusetts

Professor:	John Gibson
Subject Area:	United States History
Teacher:	J. Barry Dorovan
School:	Osgood School
Teacher:	Miss Barbara N. Hafner
School:	Columbus School
Teacher:	Mrs. Mary F. Huse
School:	Brook School
School System:	Medford, Massachusetts
Superintendent:	John Houston

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
Durham, New Hampshire

Professor:	Donald M. Murray
Subject Area:	English
Teacher:	William Sims
Principal:	Gordon Thorburn
School:	Hollis High School
School System:	Hollis, New Hampshire
Superintendent:	John A. Murphy, Jr.

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
Middletown, Connecticut

Professor:	George Cohan
Subject Area:	Social Studies
Teacher:	Ed Wilson
Principal:	Merton A. Bozoian
School:	Middletown High School
School System:	Middletown, Connecticut
Superintendent:	Clarence M. Green

YALE UNIVERSITY
New Haven, Connecticut

Professor:	David Thorburn
Subject Area:	English
Teacher:	Douglas M. Griggs
Principal:	Barry Herman
School:	Winchester School
School System:	New Haven, Connecticut
Superintendent:	John Santini

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